

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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private, help us to understand the devotion he inspired. His ideal was the righting man, ever ready to lay down his life for a noble cause. When rulers, statesmen, writers pass across the page the temperature falls. He speaks with respect but without the slightest enthusiasm of Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, and his references to Maszini are chilly and sometimes disparaging. It may be argued that he oversimplified the issue between the Risorgimento and its foes, but it was a dedicated life. Among the paladins of nineteenth-century nationalism he occupies the most honoured place.

Bismarck's *Inflections and ^collections ^* which should be read in the edition of Professor Gerhard Ritter, stand at the top of the list of political autobiographies, not merely because he is the greatest man who ever wrote a full-length narrative of his life, and not merely because the events he records are of world-wide significance, but because its value as a manual of statecraft is unsurpassed. It is too long and too detailed to suit the general reader outside or even inside Germany, though it contains many dramatic scenes, such as the conversation with the King on his appointment in 1862 and the editing of the Ems telegram; but it must always remain the chosen companion of statesmen, teachers and students of history. It produces an almost overwhelming sense of power, and the highest compliment we can pay it is to say that it is fully worthy of the author. Accepting an offer from Cotta to publish his memoirs, the fallen statesman secured an ideal assistant in his old associate of the Foreign Office, Lothar Bucher, who knew more of his master's secrets than anyone but Holstein, and who, unlike that cantankerous intriguer, remained loyal throughout. Encouraged by his collaborator,

who resided for long periods at Friedrichsrh
and Varzin and
sifted the materials, the Prince dictated
reminiscences and
reflections, sometimes spontaneously and
sometimes in
answer to questions, which Bucher sorted out
into chapters.
When the faithful old scribe, who suggested the
title of the
work, passed away in 1892, the foundations had
been laid. In
1893 the first draft was printed, serving as a
basis for the
extensive revisions which continued till the end.
The first two volumes, which were published
directly after
the author's death and end with the death of the
Emperor
Frederick, are of infinitely greater interest than
the scolding
supplement which could not appear till the
Hohen2ollern
Empire had passed away. The narrative of his
fall> which fills